WRA Chief Warns: News 7.7.43

Dies Probe May Hurt Jap-Held Prisoners

The Dies sub-committee investigation of Japanese activities in this country "may lead to further maltreatment of our citizens who are prisoners or who are interned," War Relocation Authority Director Dillon S. Myer warned the committee yesterday.

The WRA program, he said, "has been under investigation for the past eight weeks in such a manner as to achieve maximum publicity of sensational statements based on half-truths, exaggerations and falsehood.

GIVES ENEMY MATERIAL

This practice, he declared, has provided the enemy with "material which can be used to convince the people of the Orient that the United States is fighting a racial war. It is betraying the democratic objectives which this nation and its Allies are fighting to preserve."

The WRA program, he said, "is being watched in Japan where thousands of American soldiers and civilians are held as prisoners or internees; in China, India, Thailand, Burma and many other countries whose collaboration we need if we are to defeat our enemies with a minimum loss of life," he said.

Earlier in the hearing, release by the WRA of confidential memoranda to officials of the Japanese American Citizens League was scored by Rep. Mundt (R., S. D.), member of the sub-committee. It was an "utterly indefensible practice," he charged, when a committee investigator put into the record evidence that documents marked "secret and confidential" and "for use of WRA's staff only" had been found at the headquarters of the Japanese American Citizens League, 1324 14th-st nw. Committee agents seized the league's files on June 11.

This disclosure came when Mike Masaoka, one-time Washington representative of the league now in the Army, was on the stand.

Defending WRA's administration of Japanese relocation centers, Mr. Masoaka said that "while lax in some cases, the WRA has done much good by showing the American democratic way. If the camps had been under Army rule there might have been more bloodshed."

Mr. Masaoka, explaining his organization's activities to exert pressure against a measure calling for apprehension of all Japanese in this country told the committee: "It's better to get others to carry the ball."

Close on the heels of this disclosure came the revelation that a Japanese who had said somebody ought to "have the guts" to kill the President, five months later was still making anti-American speeches. The witness said he did not know why the WRA had taken no action.